

WASHINGTON - Rep. Charlie Wilson (OH-6) and a bipartisan majority of his colleagues in Congress today approved legislation that will aid workers who have lost their jobs as a result of an economy on the brink of recession. The Emergency Extended Unemployment Compensation Act, if signed into law, would immediately provide up to 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits to jobless workers in every state. It was approved by a vote of 274-137.

"Democrats are trying to help those people who are hurting. Hardworking families are struggling today more than ever," Wilson said. "For five consecutive months our economy has lost jobs. We've lost 324,000 jobs just this year. With the increase in food and gas prices, it's even harder for unemployed workers to survive."

The country has just seen the largest monthly increase in unemployment in 20 years. Unemployment rose from 5.0% in April to 5.5% in May.

The legislation approved in the House today would benefit 3.8 million unemployed Americans. It would provide up to 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits to workers exhausting the 26 weeks of regular unemployment benefits. The legislation will be paid for through the federal unemployment trust funds, which have enough reserves to cover the cost.

"I'm proud to have voted for 13 weeks of additional unemployment benefits for American workers. I believe extending unemployment benefits is the most cost effective way to stimulate our economy," Wilson said.

The Bush Administration has said it opposes the legislation considered in the House today.

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